Autumn 1995 ◆ Number 5

The Women's Quarterly

Are We Nuts?

Doctors call the national strategy to curb AIDS "wrong" and "unethical." Yet public health officials continue to put sexual politics ahead of public safety, allowing the epidemic to rage and kill needlessly, reports *Helen Mathews Smith*

Education has not worked; neither have clean needles nor lectures on "safe sex." We have condomized America, but after fourteen years the AIDS epidemic still rages out of control — not because of ignorance, but because narrow political interests have undermined the standards and traditions of the officials responsible for the nation's health.

For more than a decade, American public health officials have pursued a failed strategy. They have ignored the central tenets of plague control: routine testing, tracking the path of the disease, and warnings to those at risk. Because HIV infection has been given a unique legal and medical status, says Denver's director of public health, Dr. Franklyn N. Judson, "we have gotten off track" with a national strategy that is "irrational, erroneous, and unethical."

From the very beginning of the crisis, public health officials have seemed incapable of an appropriate response. Even though it was clear by the early 1980s that gay bathhouses were a deadly breeding ground for AIDS, Dr. Mervyn Silverman, the director of the San Francisco Department of Public Health, took three years to decide whether to regulate or close down the bathhouses. In an interview with Frances FitzGerald for her book *Cities On A Hill,* Silverman said: "I may look as if I'm responding to political pressures, but what I'm responding to is opposition from the gay community.... If gays start opposing my decisions — if they start looking on

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Drawing by Paul Barker

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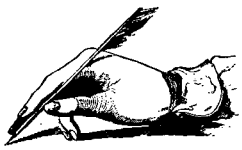
Diary



What's Her Name?

At weddings, I always find it a bit deflating to learn that a young bride plans to keep her maiden name. What's her problem? I think sourly, as the minister or rabbi rattles off the old speech about two souls becoming one. Her wedding is usually traditional in all other respects, from the frothy white gown to the centuries-old vows she will utter, pledging herself to her beloved for eternity. The bride keeps her name, it seems, to register her one, vestigial poke at tradition (and her new husband); to insist, Just because I'm all dressed up like a Precious Moments figurine doesn't mean I'm going to sacrifice my independence and autonomy.

Of course, by accepting the terms of marriage, a woman says good-bye to all that, whether she admits it or not. So, incidentally, does her husband. Why get hung up on the name?

Perhaps because the issue of name-taking arises from the enduring, feminist belief that marriage — even in its current limping and gasping form — somehow benefits men more than it does women. By entering into wedlock, a woman is potentially (to borrow one of Betty Friedan's more hysterical metaphors) boarding a train to Auschwitz. She clings to her identity in her previous life the way a prisoner treasures a keepsake. Her surname will remind her of who she was as a free person; it will prevent her from being "swallowed up."

Personally, I've always regarded a woman's tenacious use of her maiden name as a display of insecurity rather than a show of strength. I shake hands with her thinking, she is willing to share her bed, her house, her bank account, her offspring and eventually her grave with her husband — but not his name?

But even if one accepts the practice on its own terms, it misses what taking the man's name is all about. A woman today who assumes her husband's name is hardly declaring herself his chattel. She is asserting, rather, that she and her husband have formed a new family, distinct from all their previous ties, both permanent and total in its commitment. It may perhaps seem arbitrary that they take the man's name instead of making up a new one, or hyphenating both names like English nobles. But that is our custom and it is by now a harmless one. (True, matrilineal societies have existed, but they don't exactly have a superior record in the treatment of women department. Ask the Spaniards.)

The husband's last name, in any case, ceases to refer to just him. Like the trademark of a merged corporation, it reflects the combined personality of the family itself. Remember expressions like "Those are the Jones boys — they're all hellions" or, "There are the Walkers. Very nice people"? A family is not something that should be viewed like a solar system, with separate planets revolving in their own orbits, but as a small province or state, with all of its members living under the same flag, sharing a unique history, and peculiar set of customs.

Perhaps the name issue matters less — or is made moot — when the marriage is a second (or third) one, or the couple marries late in life and a woman has built a reputation of long standing under her maiden name. Some women will keep their name as a kind of professional *nom de guerre* and use their married name outside the office. But in a family in which the husband and children share one name, and the wife uses another, the woman resembles a breakaway republic: "Let me introduce you to Mr. Serbia, Junior Serbia, Sally Serbia and, oh yes, over here is Ms. Bosnia-Herzegovina. She'd like the U.N. to formally recognize her independence."

Having said all this, I have to confess to a small degree of hypocrisy on the matter: I write under my maiden name. That's because my husband is also a writer and journalist. Literary vanity prevents me from adopting his by-line. But in all other respects I am Mrs. His Wife — at parties, to school teachers, to my children's friends, on invitations, and stationery. Given my behavior at times, I'm sure even my husband would like an excuse to deny he knows me, but there it is: In marriage our identities have become entwined, inseparable. People might stare and mutter, "Poor fellow," but that's what we agreed to on that lovely June day, publicly, and before a judge — to become one, for better or worse. So what if tradition decrees we do so under his name? As every couple discovers, the balance of marital power doesn't rest in a name.

*

Speaking of names, there is an important one I would like to thank on behalf of *The Women's Quarterly*: John W. Uhlmann, whose generosity helped with the publication of this issue. We have an unwomanly desire for *TWQ* to grow fatter, and the support of people like Mr. Uhlmann will help us eventually reach our weight goal. Thank you, sir.

~ Danielle Crittenden

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"At last! I think I've found Mr. Right."

Cartoon by Charles Jaffé

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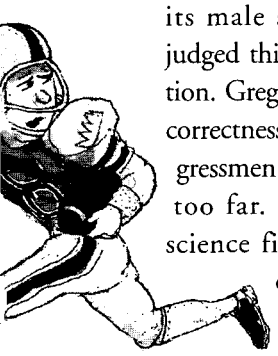
How Women Beat Men at College Sports

The universities eliminate men's teams to comply with the government's vision of fair play, writes *Jessica Gavora*

For critics of identity politics, there was a measure of justice in a scene played out before a congressional committee last spring. Vartan Gregorian, the president of Brown University, was still smarting from a U.S. district court ruling against Brown in a sex bias case. He complained bitterly to the committee — which was reviewing sex discrimination in school sports — of the "assault against common sense" the court had perpetrated, with the aid of federal authorities, in the name of "gender equity" on his campus.

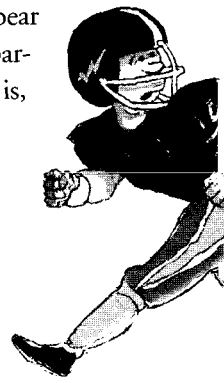
Brown stood accused of violating federal law because its female students participate in sports at lesser rates than its male students. The court had judged this as evidence of discrimination. Gregorian, no enemy of political correctness, was there to tell the congressmen that things had finally gone too far. Like a scene from a bad science fiction movie, the creature created in the laboratory of liberalism had mutated into something wild and uncontrollable, and this mad scientist was not liking it one bit.



College sports are required — by Title IX of the 1972 education amendments to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 — to provide equal opportunities for men and women. Although enacted as an anti-discrimination statute, Title IX has quietly become a quota system that has decreased sports opportunities for men while demanding endlessly expanding opportunities for women. What's more, the losers from Title IX are not limited to the now familiar angry white male. Pursuit of "gender equity" in college athletics is alienating key parts of the affirmative action constituency — black males and liberal college administrators — while minority women see little benefit. The only clear winners, for the time being, are middle- and upper-class white women.

Because men tend to participate in sports at higher rates than women, university administrators — under pressure both to comply with Title IX and balance their budgets — resort to simply cutting men's athletic slots to avoid the charge that women are "under-represented" in sports. But when men's opportunities are cut in sports such as basketball and football — which have high concentrations of minority athletes — "gender equity" often supplants racial equity, spelling trouble in the world of race and sex bean-counting. Last year, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) voted to cut men's basketball scholarships while leaving women's untouched, raising howls of protest from black coaches. At many universities, non-scholarship slots on large men's basketball, football, and track squads are being trimmed — taking opportunities for black male athletes with them. At some schools, these sports are being eliminated altogether.

And who benefits? The women's teams most often added to achieve Title IX compliance are in sports like tennis, rowing, and soccer — not the stuff of heated competition in the inner city. NCAA statistics bear this out: The women who participate in these sports (that is, sports other than women's basketball and track) are eighty-six percent white, five percent black and two percent Hispanic.



Women's participation in college sports has exploded since Title IX was enacted in 1972, rising from fewer than ten percent of coeds to almost forty percent today. Since 1982, the NCAA reports that 366 schools have started women's soccer teams, while ninety-nine have discontinued men's wrestling and sixty-four have eliminated men's swimming. Men's gymnastics is on the verge of extinction at the college level, having gone from 133 teams in 1975 to thir-

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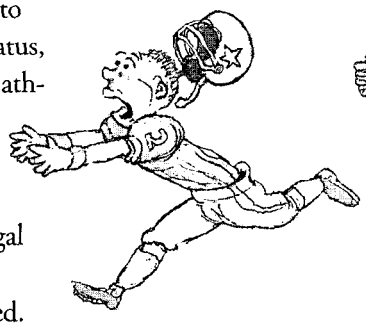
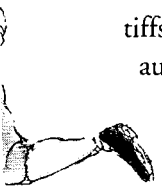
ty-two today. Meanwhile, women's tennis has soared from twenty-two Division I squads in 1982 to 131 today. The anecdotal evidence is equally revealing. Notre Dame, which eliminated men's wrestling in 1991, and may drop hockey this year, cannot afford to offer its male lacrosse players scholarship assistance — never mind that they were one of the four best teams in the nation last year. The university, meanwhile, just decided to add two new women's sports.



Although Title IX has been on the books for more than twenty years, it did not blossom as an enforcer of quota systems until the Clinton administration. The number of "compliance reviews" (that is, investigations undertaken without any formal complaint of discrimination) by the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) increased more than fourfold in the first year of Clinton's presidency. That same year, Title IX complaints doubled as plaintiffs sensed a more receptive federal audience. Each of these complaints was investigated by the OCR, which holds the trump card of ending federal funding if targeted institutions do not agree to toe the line.



Theoretically, the OCR uses three tests to determine compliance: proportionality; seeing that the athletic "interests and abilities" of women on campus have been satisfied; or by observing a history of increasing sports opportunities for women. Colleges, the OCR contends, need only meet one of these tests to get a clean bill of health. Such is the theory. Brown had drawn rave reviews from proponents and critics of Title IX alike for having a model program in women's sports. Still, when university administrators, desperate for cash, had the temerity to try to downgrade two women's sports from varsity to club status, female athletes sued and an epic legal battle followed. Brown lost. As Gregorian noted, the regulations are so elastic that schools are left in the position of continuously improving women's sports opportunities, regardless of interest or need — or face a lawsuit. "I cannot tell these women, 'You better participate in athletics otherwise you cause problems,'" he complained.

Discontent has not been limited to Brown. The president of Eastern Illinois University testified that a "voluntary" Title IX compliance agreement forced the university to cut two men's sports in order to add four for women. One of the programs foisted on EIU was women's field hockey, a sport, the university complained, that is not even played in Illinois. Willie Myers, the athletic director at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, described a recent Title IX compliance review by federal officials as "the most frustrating and stressful [experience] that I have ever encountered in my professional career."

Despite repeated pleas from coaches and administrators for clearer rules, Clinton OCR head Norma Cantu testified before Congress that issuing more definitive regulations would make Title IX "prescriptive and inflexible." In fact, the Clinton OCR has a history of relying on vague, open-ended regulations to achieve its ends. Experience has taught Clinton administration educrats that the threat of federal investigation and messy lawsuits is more effective — and easier to wield — than traditional legal or regulatory means.

Under pressure from Congress, which has threatened to end federal enforcement of "gender equity" on campus unless more objective criteria for Title IX compliance are issued, Cantu has promised to clarify the guidelines. A Department of Education source, however, said what is likely to emerge — if anything — is another issuance of "interpretation of the existing policy interpretation." In other words, not real regulatory relief but a redrawn blueprint for continued bureaucratic activism. ◆

Jessica Gavora is director of programs at the New Citizenship Project, a nonpartisan public policy group in Washington, D.C.

Cartoons by Charles Jaffé

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The Token Man

On "Brads"

Jonathan Foreman explains the men who sleep with women but prefer their male pals for everything else

An old London friend, who had just been transferred to New York, telephoned me full of anxiety about his personal life. He had looked into an Upper West Side bar and almost all the men were tall and handsome, just the way Americans are in movies. "I can't compete with that," he said, "I want to go home where no one has perfect teeth."

I assured him that he was mistaken. As a reasonable-looking, well-educated European, the numbers were *dramatically* on his side: "This is paradise for us, the land of opportunity and choice. American women are *wonderful.* They are far better educated than girls at home. They confuse our accents with erudition. And they won't hesitate to call you first, take you out to dinner and make a pass at you as you say goodnight."

As for competition from the home team, we win by default, thanks to the ubiquity of the kind of American men we Euro-exiles call "Brads." All-American, regular guys, Brads are always too busy doing things with other Brads to be a serious threat. "Brad" is not an acronym — men like this are just more likely to be called "Brad" or something equally monosyllabic.

I first encountered Brads as a law student on an Ivy League campus. On my second day, my section went to a sports bar after class. I was astonished to see three-quarters of my male classmates detach themselves from the group and move in a noisy flock of baseball caps over to the giant TV. Pitchers of beer were ordered; the guys settled down for a night of hooting at the 76ers. The women, many of whom had changed and donned makeup for the evening, stared into their glasses. Witnessing this, a French MBA student and I looked at each other in amazement. These were really attractive women being abandoned for a *game.* For a minute we found ourselves asking why straight, extrovert males would behave so unnaturally. And then we moved in.

Since law school, I've come across many more Brads. No matter how old a Brad is, part of him seems jammed forever at the nickname stage of life — somewhere between twelve and sixteen. A disproportionate number of Brads are former high-school athletes, though by their late twenties, after years of beer drinking while watching ESPN, they are usually potbellied and jowly. And they are invariably obsessed with team sports. It's not just because it brings them back to what they remember as glory days. It unites them and excludes all non-regular guys, especially (in theory) gays.

Brads hate and fear homosexuals so loudly and publicly that it's hard for a foreigner not to wonder if they are protesting a little too much. Especially as their culture is so profoundly — if vicariously — homoerotic. They go to strip clubs *together*; they watch porno movies *together.* They abominate all physical affection among men *unless* it takes place on a football field or on a hockey rink – then all that hugging, kissing, and buttock-patting is fine.

When playing Don Juan's game, Brads, for a start, don't dance. They think it's effeminate. Still worse, for Brads flirtation is a tiresome and confusing ritual. When Brads talk to women they have usually been intoxicated for some time. So they find it hard to be anything but crude, as if the prospect of sexual gratification combined with alcohol has shut down key parts of the brain.

Despite these handicaps, Brads do, of course, sleep with women. Many of them have steady, long-suffering girlfriends. They are usually married by thirty, if only because, for Brads, sex is both a biological necessity and a social obligation. (As soon as they've scored, it's back to their friends for real fun.) And because many women are forced to choose between having a Brad and being alone.

Until the James Dean era, with its worship of adolescence, whatever Braddish impulses young American men felt were mitigated by manners. Today, good manners are no longer seen as an element of adulthood. They are even considered sexist by some. But good manners once eased communication between the sexes.

American women under fifty are notoriously angry with men. It may well be that their anger stems from having to deal with so many Brads, grown men who are encouraged by the culture to be as boring and boorish as teenage boys. ◆

Jonathan Foreman is a lawyer-cum-writer who lives in New York and London.

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The *Her*story of Warfare

Women can be brave, violent, and handy with a musket. But there are good reasons why no society has ever sent them into battle alongside men, writes *Olivia Vlahos*

There is no question that women have valor. No question that they are as intelligent, capable, and brave as men. And yet I know of no society which has routinely treated men and women as interchangeable and equivalent units in war — the policy now being pursued by the American military.

Women are already being integrated into "near combat" units and trained to pilot fighter jets. Harried by congresswomen bent on proving that whatever guys can do, gals can do better, the Navy has gone furthest of all the armed services to place women where they have never been before — on fighting ships. "So far, so good," opponents of the military glass ceiling have conceded. "But not nearly far enough. After all, the armed forces — including combat units — should look like America. They'll be all the better for it."

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No Karaoke at the White House

We *were* going to publish the third of our series of interviews with potential first ladies. **Gayle Wilson** – wife of Governor Pete Wilson of California – generously agreed to speak candidly and at length to contributor **Ellen Ladowsky**. Alas, just as we were about to go to press, Gov. Wilson withdrew from the race. Our interview is now as relevant as, well, "Pete for President" buttons.

Still, we like to think of ourselves as resourceful. It seemed a shame to throw away a perfectly good interview. So we have salvaged for our readers a song that Mrs. Wilson – who was once taken to a ROTC ball by Wayne Newton – wrote about the life of a governor's wife. It goes to the tune of "My Favorite Son" from *The Will Rogers Follies*. Mrs. Wilson sang it for Miss Ladowsky:

People inquired, What is desired,
What of a spouse should be required?
Should expectations reach
beyond the house?
Well here's the scoop:
We as a group still stir the soup,
Yet can't be seen to droop.
That's life as a governor's spouse.
We smile on cue, bite our tongues too,
Say nothing the press can misconstrue.
We never ever can be heard to grouse.
Our frivolous side, we all must hide.
Be dignified. Our conscience
is our guide.
It's tough being a governor's spouse. ◆

But will they? And will *we*?

Humankind has been around long enough to have tried everything at least once. If females belong in foxholes, we should find evidence of it in previous experiments that have worked. Alas, annals of the past offer no examples of formal, sexually integrated military forces, and only one of formal but sexually segregated fighting units. It is true, of course, that small, desperate populations must put all hands to work; thus guerrilla armies often number women among their fighters.

Integration may not survive escalation of battle or organization of forces, however. The Israeli Army, during its long-term conflict with Arab neighbors, initially included women but does so no longer — has not, in fact, since 1948. Bound like men to mandatory military service, Israel's women soldiers serve today in many capacities. But not as fighters on the front lines.

Differences in sex roles and functions (military or otherwise) should not necessarily imply differences in importance. One of the most interesting divisions in political prominence could be found among traditional Iroquois of the Longhouse League. The confederacy of five (later six) tribes was based on clan memberships. Each clan in each tribe provided male representatives to sit in grand council meetings. The choice of representatives was, however, vested in clan matrons who were also empowered to impeach any chief who failed in his duties. Men governed among the Iroquois, but women elected. Women did not go to war, but they did participate enthusiastically in the ritual torture of battle captives and were said to be better at it than men, more ruthless and ingenious. So great was the female influence in Iroquois affairs that the Plains Dakota (with whom the Iroquois were briefly and unsuccessfully at war) taunted their invaders with being henpecked.

Near neighbors of the Iroquois were the hunting and gathering Ojibwa, who lived around the Great Lakes. Politically less complex than the Iroquois, their warfare was correspondingly less formally organized and led. Impromptu war parties were ordinarily assembled and captained by the man on whom the Great Powers had conferred a Superior Dream. Once in a great while, the Superior Dream was awarded to a woman who was then followed without question by the warriors. (Among the Ojibwa, as among many other Native Americans, such visions transcended sex.) After the battle, the woman warrior was given in marriage to the bravest man, whereupon she put aside the glories of war for the glories of bearing children. In bearing children many cultures have seen a connection with battle. The Aztec, for example, awarded the full honors of a warrior to the woman who died in childbirth.

The more common roles of women in wartime have cast them as cheerleaders or as assistants to warrior husbands. Wives of the Brazilian Yanomamo often goaded their menfolk into battle, anxious that their village's reputation for ferocity be maintained. Only in that way could they protect themselves and their children from abduction by enemy raiders. Driven by the warrior ethos, mothers of ancient Sparta similarly incited their soldier sons with the words, "Come back with your shield or on it." And it seems the many warrior goddesses

Drawing by Dick Wright

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of classical mythologies served as feminine inspiration for the male fighting spirit, not as role models for living females.

There are also many past examples of wives serving on the battlefield as informal auxiliaries. They could do so effectively because their persons were ordinarily considered sacrosanct. If the women of the northern California Yurok saw their husbands about to be bested, they would rush wailing and keening into the fray as if to part the combatants, and then, at the crucial moment, would pinion the enemy so as to give their menfolk a clear shot. Among the Kapauku Papuans (as among all New Guinea highlanders) war was (and perhaps still is) a normal part of life. In the 1950s, anthropologist Leopold Pospisil witnessed many a battle, and reports that in the intervals punctuating combat Kapauku women entered the field to gather spent arrows – and also to observe enemy positions and strength. Whatever they learned they shouted immediately. Helpless to prevent this espionage, the invaders could only attempt to rout the spies. They were not always successful, so adept were women in the punitive use of their walking sticks. Because married women enjoyed immunity from military violence (including rape), they regularly protected their menfolk from ambush on the way to battle by marching on the flanks.

German tribeswomen of the first century A.D. (so admired by the Roman historian Tacitus for their family values and high-minded morality) brought weapons to their husbands as wedding gifts, and were given weapons in return. It was understood that they would share their husbands' fortunes, good or bad, and they willingly lent a hand when hubby was getting the worst of it in battle. Indeed, Roman soldiers dreaded to face these female furies fighting to defend their men and their homes. It is all very reminiscent of the behavior of women on the American frontier, loading muskets for their men, and, in a pinch, replacing them on the firing line. But only in a pinch.

Some societies have indeed displayed considerable sexual overlap in battle situations. Sex distinctions have persisted nonetheless. If men and women performed the same tasks, they did so on a segregated basis or with different aims in view. Consider the Sauromate, a people described by the Greek historian Herodotus. Among these cousins of the Scythians, said Herodotus, women wore male clothing, and hunted and went to war with men. But, it turns out, for different reasons. In order to marry, the Sauromate girl had to procure an enemy head. After that she retired from the fray.

The only formally organized female troops I've come across in ethnographic literature could once be found in the Kingdom of Dahomey in West Africa. (It exists today as a nation, though unaccountably renamed Benin. I say "unaccountably" because the original Kingdom of Benin is still alive and well and living in modern Nigeria.) Before the arrival of Europeans, the king of Dahomey included in his conquering army a regiment of women the English visitor, Sir Richard Burton, famously called "the Amazons." These intrepid women served as the king's shock troops, even willing to undertake suicide missions at his behest. It was a force sexually segregated in more ways than one. The Amazons were technically wives of the king and so were expected to remain celibate. Sexual adventuring with soldiers in the male regiments could result in burial alive or some other equally unattractive mode of execution — for both parties to the crime. The king played no favorites.

The heroism of Dahomey's Amazons, like the ferocity of the Iroquois matrons in applying torture, goes far to demonstrate that aggression and capability for violence are not foreign to females.

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But hormonal patterns underpinning aggression differ in the two sexes. These patterns originate in the sexual apparatus, and their behavioral correlates are plain at birth (before birth, most mothers would claim). Studies with animals suggest that aggression in females is most strongly stimulated when their young are under threat. Females then become very fierce indeed ("more deadly than the male," observed Kipling). Extra doses of estrogen serve only to heighten this tendency. But there are other sources of hormones located in the adrenal glands of both sexes. Women more liberally supplied than their sisters with androgens from these sources may tend to be more like men in terms of energy levels, athleticism, and general feistiness. Even so, it is unlikely that the numbers of manly women will ever draw even with those of manly men. Unlikely, too, that as many women will ever function as well in combat as men. Or will want to do so, for that matter. "Biology is not destiny," said anthropologist Lionel Tiger, "but it is statistical probability."

And then there is the sex drive itself — powerful and compelling — to be considered. Not surprisingly, it seems to be closely entwined with aggression. Perhaps this is why male warriors in combat often experience the physical manifestations of the drive. Simpler societies employed it in symbolism. Ronald Berndt, who studied several peoples of east New Guinea, quotes one of their war songs which includes this phrase,"Our penes are erect like arrows. We go to hide in ambush." Rock art of the Stone and Bronze Ages depicts warriors in ithyphallic condition. Men seized by religious ecstasy are similarly portrayed.

But if the sex drive fuels many great emotions and serves many purposes in life, the purposes must not be mixed. This has been well understood by previous civilizations. To introduce the possibility of sexual encounter when another undertaking is in progress is to divert energy and resolve. Even the easygoing Polynesians insisted on suspending dalliance during seasons of ritual, and enjoined chastity for certain craftsmen at their creative labors.

Later peoples who fought in that region would also recognize the value of sexual abstinence. "We never minded it," a veteran of World War II in the Pacific said to me. "It seemed somehow appropriate, part of the discipline. It underlined the importance of our task. We felt, in a way, like athletes who abstain in order to focus their energies. When nurses were brought to Guam, feelings got muddled and confused."

Competition for sexual opportunities can compromise discipline, cooperation, and the fighting spirit of men bonded for combat. The American military has thus appropriately resisted the enlistment of known homosexuals in its ranks. And yet, females in the fighting forces, living and working in close quarters with males, offer the same threat. It is not a matter of sexual equality here, but of the sex drive itself, which, in the interests of victory, must be turned unequivocally to the service of combat.

That sexual misconduct in sexually integrated units occurred during the Gulf war, aboard integrated ships afterward, and continues to occur even in the integrated service academies, is not surprising. What is surprising is that there has not been more of it. Given the prevailing climate of sexual permissiveness, it is all the more surprising. And yet, those few episodes have unleashed public outrage. Each new incident of "abuse" has escalated demands for the punishment of offending males and ever more stringent sensitivity training for males likely to offend. As Gloria Steinem put it in her commencement address last May to Smith College: "Now you are becoming the men you once would have wanted to marry. But too few men are becoming the women they want to marry."

Perhaps it is this very prospect that has driven down the numbers of young male enlistees in the armed services, forcing recruiters to fill the gaps with females. How will the increased numbers of military women change the character of the military? Should we expect ever more charges of sexual misconduct to surface? Ever more pregnancies? Ever more shamefaced and resentful male soldiers with ever lower morale? What is the ultimate mission of the military after all? To serve the needs of national security or the needs of sexual equality?

There is a way to do both. There is a way to insure the civil rights, career rights, and personal dignity of military women without at the same time demonizing and diminishing military men. That way is called segregation.

Never mind that segregation is now a dirty word. Consider the benefits segregation would bring. Sexual exploitation, harassment, and abuse (of the heterosexual variety, at least) would vanish overnight. The numbers of female soldiers rendered unfit for duty by reason of pregnancy would shrink. Affirmative action to insure

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career advancement of women would no longer be necessary. Female merit evaluated by female officers would be the sole criterion of promotion.

Sex segregation by military unit and military task is a part of our own national experience. During World War II each service had its all-female auxiliaries whose efforts freed men for combat. Among these auxiliaries were the WACS, the WAVES, and the WASPS (female flyers who performed so magnificently ferrying war planes to Britain). There may have been some unhappiness in the ranks about a lack of proper recognition, but I cannot recall a single publicized incident of sexual misconduct.

It was the assignment of specialized tasks to the female services that so rankled feminists, implying (in their view) inequality of prestige and curtailment of career opportunities. Their steadfast goals have been the abolition of sexual distinctions and the guarantee of female access to all military pursuits up to and including combat.

But how about taking precedent into account? Consider this alternative: Let Congress and the military brass follow the Dahomean (Amazon) example. Let women fight in their own regiments with their own support services — supply, maintenance, medical care. Give them their own fighting ships guarded by their own fighting jets. In that way, casualties taken by female troops aboard ship or on the field cannot impair the efficiency of male counterparts who, in integrated units, might otherwise break ranks to attempt rescue. In that way, morale in both male and female units would remain high; concentration on the business at hand would be uncompromised. No mixed messages sent; none received. Only childless women should be permitted to serve in combat units, however. Such a rule would function, to some extent, to protect children — who unfortunately bring up the rear of anyone's concerns when reformist projects are in the works.

Can this be done? Probably not. One has to admit that, in many ways, the primitive and ancient peoples of the world have been wiser than we. For all our vaunted can-do and know-how, we seem less willing than they to accept the laws of nature, less willing to modify and adapt those laws without seeking to repeal them outright. Unlike ourselves, primitive peoples have understood that the sex drive is the most powerful and potentially the most divisive force in life. Sensibly, they everywhere hedged it round with structures and strictures (different in every society but always there) so as to preserve society's basic glue.

If such peoples had ever found it necessary to put their females in foxholes, you can bet your bottom dollar those foxholes would be labeled "His" and "Hers." Never "Theirs." ◆

Olivia Vlahos is a retired professor of anthropology and the author of seven books in her field.

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Mrs. Smith Came to Washington...

...and decided she'd rather cash in on her husband than hold boring old teas, observes *Rebecca Borders*

As Hillary Clinton beats a hasty retreat into the role of traditional first lady, the wives of other Washington politicians may begin to feel the heat from a public that is increasingly suspicious of the influence these women wield.

The capital's social code has certainly changed since Lindy Boggs first accompanied her husband, Hale, into Washington in 1940. She found there a strict system within the ranks of congressional wives: "A rigid calling system required that, as a newcomer, you call at the home of everyone senior to your husband and leave a calling card," Mrs. Boggs wrote in her 1994 autobiography. "Monday was Supreme Court day, Tuesday was House of Representatives, Wednesday was cabinet, Thursday was Senate, Friday was diplomatic. You did no calling on Saturday, and on Sunday you returned calls if accompanied by your husband."

Today, social networking in Washington still can be a six-day-a-week endeavor, but unlike in Boggs' time, there are virtually no restrictions on what a wife can do. Two-career couples arrive in Washington, and the woman feels she'll be damned before she gives up her professional ambitions for her husband. The trouble is, there are few careers in Washington — outside of, say, usherette at the Kennedy Center or bear feeder at the National Zoo — that do not overlap with politics. A Washington wife's determination to pursue her career will often land her in situations that make Mrs. Clinton's years at the Rose law firm, while her husband was a state governor, seem almost virtuous.

Public patronage of Washington wives is well known because it's, well, public: the appointment of Anne K. Bingaman, head of the antitrust division of the Justice Department and wife of Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D., N.M.), comes to mind. This practice is much criticized, as perhaps it should be, but at least it's true that whatever benefits the wife gains she gains in full view. More, she is limited in what she can gain financially. The salaries of civil servants may seem royal, but they are peanuts in the world of Washington influence peddling. The real money to be made lies in the Washington service economy, where wives can prosper from their political connections without public scrutiny.

Once, if a large lobbying organization wanted to write a big check to a congressman, it invited him to speak at a conference. Congressmen can no longer accept these checks — but their wives still can. Hayes, Domenici and Associates is a prominent Washington events and public relations firm owned and operated by Leslie Hayes and Rose Ann Domenici. Hayes is the wife of Rep. Jimmy Hayes (D., La.), and Domenici is the sister of Sen. Pete Domenici (R., N.M.). Named by *Washingtonian* magazine as the area's "hottest" events planning firm, it was founded in 1992 to handle arrangements for special events at the Republican and Democratic National Conventions. Originally, the partner-

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ship also included Colleen Nunn, wife of Sen. Sam Nunn (D., Ga.).

Leslie Hayes learned the ropes of party planning and event consulting from the firm Washington Inc., founded and operated by Ellen Proxmire, wife of former Sen. William Proxmire (D., Wis.) and Barbara Boggs, wife of Washington superlobbyist Tommy Boggs (and daughter-in-law of Lindy). Washington Inc. became a multi-million dollar a year business. Proxmire and Boggs have since gone their separate ways but each continues to run her own successful events planning firm.

Professional party throwing is not the only career path for ambitious wives. Harriet Pressler is a realtor specializing in properties on Capitol Hill. As the wife of Sen. Larry Pressler (R., S.D.), she is a natural draw for corporate clients to her realty company, as well as for other members of Congress. Franki Roberts, wife of Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R., Kan.), Pat Oxley, wife of Rep. Michael Oxley (R., Ohio), and Gayle Kildee, wife of Rep. Dale Kildee (D., Mich.), also work as Washington real estate agents.

To decorate his new home, a cunning client might call Sharon Archer Designs, run by the wife of Rep. Bill Archer (R., Tex.), chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee. For furnishings, Mrs. Archer might suggest her client visit Washington antiques broker Barbara Richardson, wife of Rep. Bill Richardson (D., N.M.) — although that would be sending business to the political enemy.

Some wives' careers are even more directly connected to their husbands' political activities. Jean Kurth Oberstar is the president of the aviation consulting firm of Kurth & Co. in Washington. She married Rep. James Oberstar (D., Minn.) in 1993 after both were widowed. The couple share a professional interest in the aviation industry because Rep. Oberstar is the former chairman and current ranking member of the House Aviation Subcommittee.

Of course, a spouse needn't travel all the way to Washington to cash in on her connection. Maintaining a business back home in the congressional district can also be profitable. Betty Dixon, wife of Rep. Julian Dixon (D., Calif.), ran into controversy for obtaining a coveted gift shop concession contract at the Los Angeles Airport. She reaped deals that, according to the *Los Angeles Times,* paid her a total of $499,408 for the gift shop concession from 1985 to 1990.

In this era of sexual equality, you needn't be a wife to make a score. Husbands can prosper, too. Anthony Morella is an attorney and partner in the Washington law firm of Hewes, Morella, Gelband and Laberton. He is also a registered lobbyist. In the lobbyist directory *Washington Representatives,* Morella's listing under "background" mentions his wife, Rep. Constance Morella (R., Md.) — an obvious asset to any lobbying firm. Morella, however, maintains that his life remains unaffected by his wife's position: "Nothing changed in my life when my wife was elected to Congress — not for one single minute."

Of course, lobbyist spouses are nothing new. Ruth Harkin, wife of Sen. Tom Harkin (D., Iowa) worked as a lobbyist at the Washington firm of Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld prior to her appointment as the president of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC).

Are there any Lindy Boggses left in Washington? They're rare, but they exist. Attorney Brenda Talent was made partner at the prestigious Bryan Cave law firm in St. Louis just before her husband, James, was elected to the House in 1992. But what Brenda Talent did surprised everyone: She walked away from her firm even after being offered a position in the Washington office. "Now I just have nine plates spinning instead of ten," Talent laughs. Still active in legal and political circles, she has remained in St. Louis with her two children where she teaches law part-time at Washington University and runs her husband's re-election campaigns.

It may seem unfair — particularly given the low standards of morality that reign in Washington — to suggest that other political spouses should make the noble sacrifice of a Mrs. Talent. As Alejandro Benes, managing director of the Center for Public Integrity, put it: "If the spouse is not doing business with any sector of the government, then no question needs to be raised. If the spouse is using the family relationship as fly paper, then it perhaps raises a question of taste but not necessarily in this town a question of ethical propriety."

But those outside Washington — *i.e.,* constituents — may view the situation differently. Playing the role of supportive political spouse without risking a "question of taste" may well be worth the professional and financial sacrifice. ◆

Rebecca Borders is coauthor of Beyond the Hill, A Directory of Congress from 1984 to 1993: Where Have All the Members Gone? *(University Press of America: 1995).*

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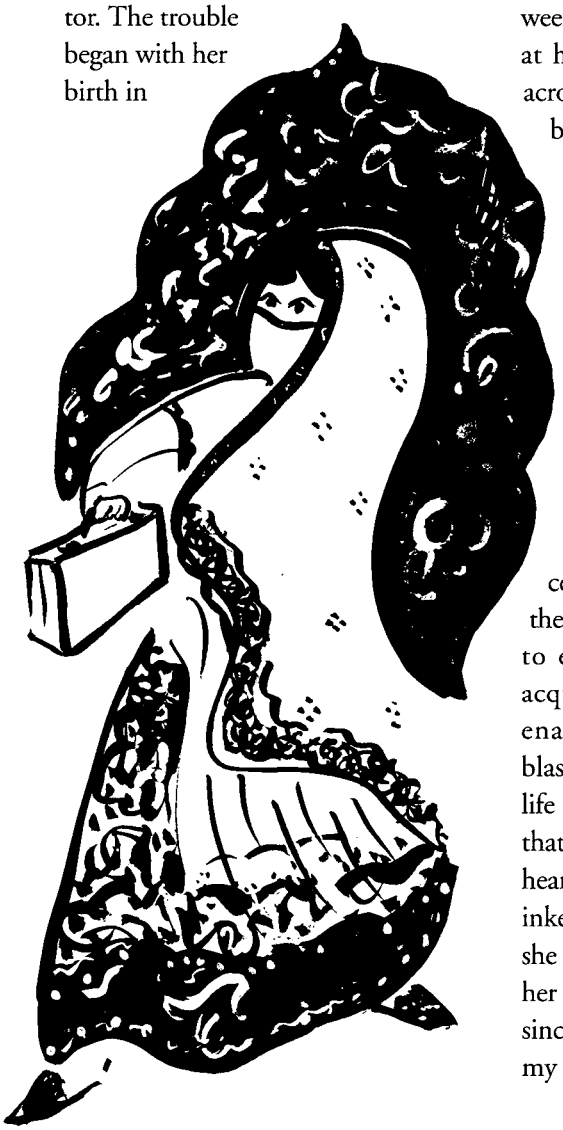
Dispatch

Streetwalking in Lahore

The oppression of women in Pakistan may be due more to zealous bureaucrats than Islamic fundamentalism, writes *David Warren*

Lahore, Pakistan

The woman in my custody was not in chains. She was a perfectly respectable person, at least in my eyes, for she was my boss. I was the scriptwriter for a documentary movie, and she was my director. The trouble began with her birth in Delhi, India — and developed when we visited Lahore, Pakistan.



For me, the trip was not part of my job; it was a break from the work that we were doing in India. Lahore is the city where I lived the most impressionable years of my boyhood, and I had a week free. The director had three days at her disposal, and had never been across that border. As a girl, she had been chosen to represent her school in a "cultural exchange" during a thaw in Indo-Pakistan relations, only to be turned back at the Pakistan frontier when it was discovered that she was female. But that was when she had an Indian passport. Now she was carrying Canadian documents, acceptable to the world's most fastidious border officials. She had obtained a visa. My director was raised with certain emancipated notions about the place of women; she did not have to emigrate to North America to acquire them, though America had enabled her to become somewhat blasé. She had often wondered what life might be like on the other side of that frontier — penciled through the heart of the Punjab at Partition, then inked with two million lives. Now, all she needed was a man to accompany her when walking Islamic streets; and since I was going anyway, "You can be my brother."

There was a difficulty with this plan. I have red hair, blue eyes, pink skin, and perspire freely. Passersby might speculate at length about the relation between us, yet never guess that I was her brother.

Among all the countries into which one might plausibly insinuate a female acquaintance, Pakistan was never my first choice. I recalled women in *purdah* across a gulf of thirty years. My director assured me that I had been consistently over-respectful to cultural sensitivities in urban India; surely I would find Lahore, too, much changed. All the same, I told her to be from Akron, Ohio; on no occasion was she to utter a word in her mellifluous Delhi Hindi (close enough to Lahore's Urdu to be easily understood). When anywhere near me, she must walk and talk and gawk just like an American or, better, some inoffensive visitor from Mars.

We boarded the solitary PIA flight from Delhi, with tape-recorded prayers to Allah before ascent and descent. The handful of other passengers were all male, all mullahs. We arrived at the Lahore airport after dark. There was instant confusion as we sought Pakistani rupees: Both foreign exchange counters were closed. My suave expectation that I would

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find my way around the city of my childhood was quickly compressed amid the heat of a thousand crowded shouting bodies, each apparently offering me his services as a guide. Unbothered, my director tried her Hindi. It was easily understood. She found money, and a taxi, and argued down the fare, just as if she were herself a Lahori. "Why must you make an issue of such things?"

The next morning, collecting her at the promised hour from her hotel lobby, I suffered another crisis of confidence. While not precisely hoping for jeans, I had expressly asked that she look like an American. My director was instead wearing *shalwar kameez* — like any Pakistani woman, except that the color was a pulsating mango. "So shall we start along The Mall?"

Walking, I became conscious of an artificial grimness. I looked for the bazaars, tea stalls, fruit barrows, ice cream carts I remembered from long ago — there were none. Noticing the sliding grates pulled closed beneath the signboards of restaurants, I realized to my horror that it was Ramadan. This holy fast was now enforced by civil law, and would mean no eating until sunset — even as the tickling smells of curries leached illicitly from shuttered buildings.

It took an hour for my particular nightmare to materialize. A smart-looking, stocky, white-shirted man, with neatly trimmed mustache, had a question for my director, though as a gallant courtesy he addressed it to me as her keeper.

"Excuse me, Sir. Would you be a Pakistani?"

"No," I confessed. (He did not seem surprised.)

"I am questioning about the lady in your company, Sir. I am questioning if she would be a Pakistani?"

"No," I averred.

"Sir, it is astonishing that she would not be a Pakistani. I am noticing that she would have indeed the resemblance of a Pakistani."

"She is a Canadian citizen."

"And would this lady be your wife, Sir?"

I feigned incomprehension while deciding that an explanation of my relation as a scriptwriter to this director of a cinematographic film being shot, not here without a permit but in despised "Hindustan," might, with other connecting details, seem cumbersome to my interlocutor, and that the least bad answer would probably be, "Yes."

"I do not think that you are understanding, Sir, that we Pakistanis do not like Christians."

On the contrary, I grasped this right away.

The man walked on, but the conversation was repeated, with slight variations, several times that day.

On the next day, although we had not spotted a single example of a woman in public unattended by a man, my director resolved to go out on her own, and was in fact not accosted. She was however startled to discover the degree of her celebrity when, in the heat of the afternoon, she asked a policeman for directions to a well-known monument. "That was where you were exactly at 11:15 this morning," was his first reply.

On the third day, after seeing my director to the airport, I went to the Walled City and Anarkali — ancient neighborhoods in contrast to the British-built sections I had been surveying. And there, at last, I saw unattended women, and food being openly consumed in streaking sunlight, old men cheerfully smoking and chewing betel, goods for sale, bright canopies, and many other signs of happy harmless living. In my childhood, these winding lanes had seemed dark and outwardly pious; it was The Mall where the mildly Westernized woman strode with her face uncovered. The mores of old and new had somehow been reversed.

I was in Lahore eight days, and what I have recounted was a small part even of that brief experience. Another friend, male, emigrant Pakistani, passed through Lahore about the same time, then to several other Punjabi cities. He reports that the atmosphere in no two was the same. And my director later generously allowed that if Lahore was a backwater to her native cosmopolitan Delhi, and felt comparatively unfree, men in Lahore did not leer at her. Men of Delhi freely leer and pinch (they call it "Eve-teasing" and insist that women enjoy it). "In their own strange way, the Lahoris were showing respect for women."

My own first impression, that I was encountering what we in America call "Islamic fundamentalism," evaporated quickly. From the dress, demeanor, and the places we were stopped, I guessed that our tormentors belonged to the civil service elite, which is not otherwise oppressively religious. For them, Islam may be less an ideal way to live than a *lathi* to beat down proliferating threats to their actual form of life as tax-sucking parasites. ◆

David Warren, editor of the lately-deceased Idler *magazine, now scriptwrites, ghostwrites, speechwrites, and sometimes writes for a living.*

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I'll Represent Myself, Thanks

Rael Jean Isaac relates the horrors committed by the Legal Services Corporation on "behalf" of women

Earlier this year, Lehigh Valley Legal Services brought suit on behalf of a juvenile delinquent seeking custody of the child he had fathered by rape.

The sixteen-year-old rapist had already been in two detention centers for criminal offenses including assault and receiving stolen property. The baby girl, given up for adoption by her thirteen-year-old mother (who had been beaten as well as raped), had been placed in a Lutheran Home with foster parents preparing to adopt her. The legal grounds put forward by Lehigh Valley Legal Services — one of three hundred local Legal Services programs funded by the federal government to provide lawyers for the poor in civil cases — were as bizarre as the case. It argued that Pennsylvania state law, which terminates parental rights in cases of conception by rape, was unconstitutional because rape was not defined in the adoption act.

The rapist did not obtain custody of the baby. Judge Jack A. Panella, in expressing amazement that anyone would bring such a case, noted that the rapist "has apparently received support from some misguided adults and family members." But it's not really that amazing: The case is yet another example of the Legal Services Corporation's activism on "behalf" of the poor that ultimately harms the poor, particularly poor women. Nowhere is this more apparent than in

public housing, where women and their children constitute the overwhelming majority of tenants, yet where Legal Services programs routinely prevent the eviction of drug dealers, murderers, and other criminals who turn the projects into terror zones. To add insult to injury, the poor women who are the chief victims of such programs continue to be publicly paraded as its prime beneficiaries.

The chief problem with the Legal Services Corporation arises from its legal philosophy, which can be summed up as "Rights without responsibilities," or, more crudely, "Behavior shouldn't matter." Michael Pileggi, attorney for the Philadelphia Housing Authority, tells of a tenant who set fire to her unit. When the Philadelphia Housing Authority obtained a court ruling evicting her on grounds of arson, Legal Services filed a federal civil rights lawsuit on her behalf. Pileggi reports that Legal Services also makes extensive, illegitimate use of bankruptcy proceedings to prevent evictions of similarly criminal tenants.

Harriet Henson, a single mother formerly on welfare, now heads Northside Tenants Reorganization, a tenants council that represents 333 housing units on the north side of Pittsburgh. More than eighty percent of the tenants are single mothers. Although the tenants council worked out an agreement with Legal Services to cooperate in eviction cases, it fell apart with the very first case. Henson describes what happened: "We called Neighborhood Legal Services and they went with us to this woman's house. We went from the basement to the third floor looking at all the abuse this woman and her bad children did to this house. She was so filthy that though she knew we were coming, she left a used tampon — I'll never forget it — in the middle of the floor. We all stepped over it just like none of us saw it. When we got out on the porch we looked at the Legal Services attorney and we asked her, 'Well, what do you

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think about what we were saying?' The woman then turned to me and said, 'Well, she has to live somewhere.'" (Legal Services sued, forcing management to pay $6,000 in taxpayers' money to fix the house. A year later, says Henson, the house had been torn up again.)

John Hiscox, director of the Macon (Georgia) Housing Authority, points out the fallacy of the "But if we evict them they'll be homeless" argument that Legal Services usually pulls out as its moral trump card. Says Hiscox: "Legal Services' opposition to eviction fails miserably as a homeless prevention strategy. In many of the cities where Legal Services has enjoyed its greatest successes in preventing evictions, drug gangs have made many public housing developments all but uninhabitable, with the results that vacancies have skyrocketed. In Chicago, for example, the accumulated vacancies would, if aggregated into a single city, constitute one of the ten largest housing authorities in the country. When drug gangs turn public housing into hellholes, even the most destitute turn it down."

As Henson observes, a small number of families are enough to create havoc for the rest and, "the grapevine gets around: You don't have to do this to stay here, you don't have to do that; they can't do a thing to you. It doesn't take much to bring down a neighborhood. Those of us who live here, we're putting our lives on the line. Legal Services doesn't have to worry about gangs coming back at them; they come back at us."

Even murder does not fall outside Legal Services' "anything goes" approach. When a young thug killed a nine-year-old in a Charleston, West Virginia public housing project, he was not charged with murder because he was a juvenile. Soon he was back on the street with his Uzi submachine gun. Legal Services successfully fought the housing authority's effort to evict the family.

The impact of Legal Services on poor women has been particularly insidious. Starting in the late 1960s, when the program was still part of the Office of Economic Opportunity, Legal Services won a series of "impact cases" that went as high as the Supreme Court, many of them focusing on the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. The upshot of these cases was to transform the social ground rules. Benefits would no longer be contingent on meeting any behavioral standard. After all, argued Legal Services — and courts bought the argument — the unacceptable alternative was to penalize needy children because of their mother. Nor could a boyfriend who lived in the house be expected to contribute to the support of the family for he lacked a "legal duty" to do so.

That philosophy continues today. A recent issue of the *Women's Advocate* (a publication of the National Center on Women and Family Law – a Legal Services Corporation national support center) provides a series of arguments against the Clinton administration's proposals for welfare reforms to make fathers contribute to their children's support. The *Women's Advocate* complains that the proposals make the mistake of assuming that two-parent families are best. "Such unfounded rhetoric touting the superiority of two-parent families contributes to the negative stereotypes of single-parent families which deprives them of respect and impairs their ability to function." The *Women's Advocate* further warns that establishing paternity ignores the dangers of domestic violence. Does the administration seek to encourage fathers to participate in their children's lives? The *Women's Advocate* is not even prepared to view this as a good idea. "The proposal again assumes that interaction with both parents always benefits children."

Given these attitudes, it is perhaps not surprising that Legal Services has offered little legal assistance in the area of child support even though two-thirds of their clients are women, and fewer than half of poor women have received a child support award. Instead, Legal Services programs batten on to poor women and children, pirating the money appropriated on their behalf. In his congressional testimony, Michael Pileggi reported last year that the Philadelphia Housing Authority paid $194,000 in attorney fees to Legal Services. Mind you, Legal Services salaries and expenses are wholly paid for by the government. But by bringing suits under a variety of civil rights statutes that permit fee shifting, Legal Services can collect twice. And so, Pileggi explains, in what judges dub "leaky faucet cases," Legal Services takes minor matters easily solved through the Public Housing Authority's administrative grievance process, and converts them into full-blown civil rights suits in federal court. Legal Services then demands an exorbitant $210 an hour in attorney fees for these so-called "civil rights" actions, money siphoned away from repairs, programs, and upkeep for residents.

In the end, Legal Services is a program of, by, and for ideological elites — and, of course, the criminals who

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benefit from such sophisticated legal help. Its chief supporters are lawyers and the media, which are mesmerized by Legal Services' empty rhetoric of service to the poor. For years this formidable combination deterred lawmakers (on both sides of the aisle) from attempting meaningful reform. But now the Republican leadership is trying to turn Legal Services over to the states and zero out federal funds over three years. Will it happen, despite pressure from the American Bar Association? For the poor's sake, let's hope so. ◆

Rael Jean Isaac writes frequently on public policy issues.

Continued from page 1

me as a heavy father — then the whole issue of AIDS gets lost."

And the last thing any public health official wants to do is play the "heavy." In the early 1980s, Dr. David Axelrod, then-commissioner of health for New York State, described efforts to close bathhouses as "ridiculous." He also refused to classify AIDS as a sexually transmitted disease. As a result, and with the support of Governor Mario Cuomo, the testing and partner-notification regulations that apply to syphilis and gonorrhea do not apply to HIV infection in New York State.

Things haven't gotten much better in the intervening decade. When a new wave of sex clubs opened in New York City in 1993, city health commissioner Margaret A. Hamburg suggested that working with the clubs might be more helpful than shutting them down. "Our goal," said Hamburg, "is to reduce high risk behavior through education."

This was certainly not the style of London's Dr. John Snow. In 1854, when Snow traced an outbreak of cholera to the Broad Street pump, he didn't hold a consensus conference or ask local shopkeepers for permission to shut it down. The pump had to go, said Snow, because it was killing people, and city officials removed it. Snow, by the way, didn't know what caused cholera, and he certainly didn't have a cure for it — but he saved a great many lives. There are few public officials like Snow anymore.

The collapse of the nation's AIDS strategy is undebatable. The federal government has spent tens of millions of dollars on education, group counseling, and behavior-modification research. It has spawned a huge bureaucracy of AIDS social workers and neighborhood activists whose livelihood depends on what government publications describe as "culturally sensitive, community-based programs."

Two out of three middle and upper schools in the nation offer AIDS education courses, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the federal agency responsible for the public's health, publishes hundreds of pamphlets and brochures. The Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), the largest AIDS activist group in the nation, with a budget of about $18 million a year, also has educational programs. None of these efforts has been able to stem a second tide of infection. Increased rates began showing up in the late 1980s, but it was not until 1995 that any media attention was given to the annual 2.5 percent increase in HIV infection among young gay men.

Since 1981, almost half-a-million cases of AIDS have been reported, and every year there are forty thousand new infections. Over sixty thousand women have been diagnosed with AIDS, and about half of the cases have been reported in just the last four years. The sharpest rate of increase is not among drug addicts, but among young black and Hispanic women infected through heterosexual sex.

In 1994, for the first time in the history of the epidemic, the ratio of young women to men shifted: more adolescent girls were infected than boys, and almost three-fourths did not know their partners were HIV-positive. Add high rates of youth alcoholism and drug abuse, and you have the next leading edge of the virus among all races.

What happened? Gay activist and writer Michelangelo Signoreli gave one explanation in an essay in the *New York Times* last February. Signoreli made the point that out of a fear of "stigmatizing" AIDS-infected people, AIDS organizations have "placed most if not all of the onus on the HIV-negative person not to become infected." It is precisely this bias that is one of the root causes of the government's failure to contain the epidemic.

Widespread HIV testing was discouraged by public health officials to protect the civil rights of the infected, but unless those who are infected know their HIV status, they can neither protect their sexual partners nor get early treatment for themselves. After heated debate, and years of opposition from the ACLU and AIDS activists, New York State finally passed a law in 1995 permitting a rape victim

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to request an HIV test from the man convicted of raping her. Until then, a victim did not have the right to know whether her rapist was also her executioner. Testing continues to be characterized by public health officials as an individual choice — never an obligation. In spite of a horrifying infection rate of twelve percent for men and twenty percent for women in New York State prisons, HIV tests are still not required even of inmates.

I met two of the victims of America's failed war on AIDS at the Incarnation Children's Center in New York City, an eighteen-bed AIDS hospice and clinic in Harlem. Isabel Argueta is a small woman with short dark hair, olive skin, and an oval face. Beside her was her three-year-old son, Jonathan — a frail looking boy wearing chocolate-colored shorts that came down almost to his ankles.

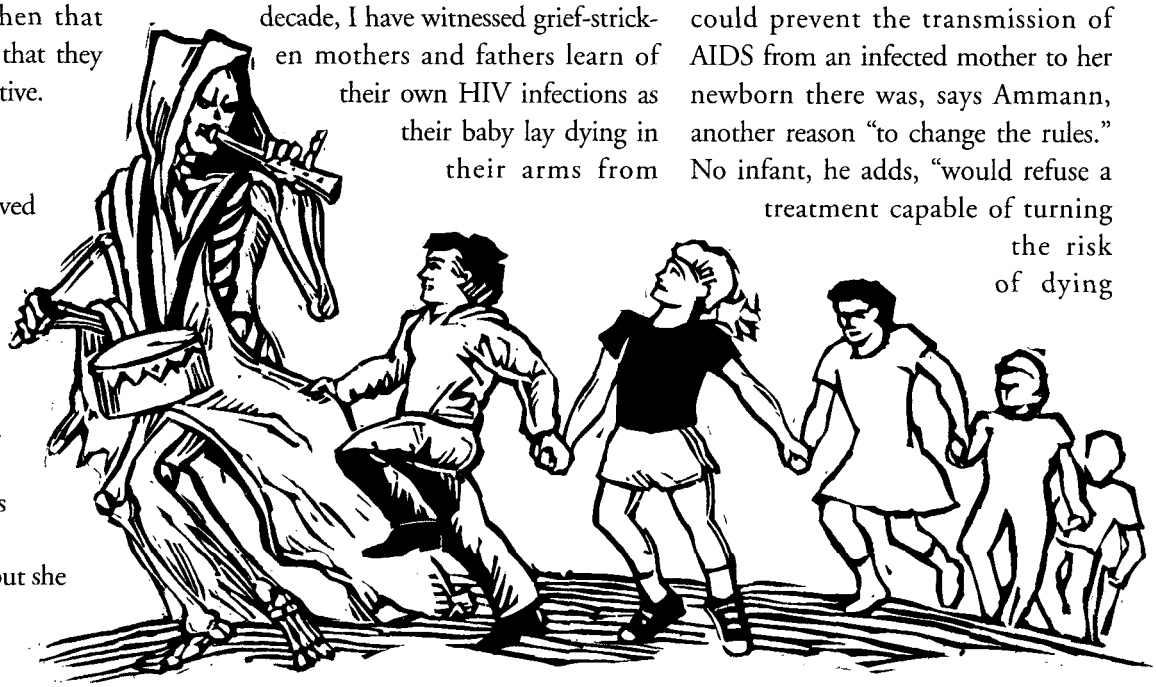
When Jonathan was eight months old, he became deathly ill with pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP), and it was only then that Argueta discovered that they were both HIV-positive. When she told Jonathan's father, he packed his bags, moved in with another woman, and then left for Central America where he is now dying of AIDS. Argueta says Jonathan's father was bisexual and involved with drugs, but she doesn't think he was ever tested for HIV. If he was, he never told her about it. She insists that neither before nor during her pregnancy was she asked to take an HIV test. Like the vast majority of infected women in America, Argueta did not find out she was sick until someone in her family became ill.

Jonathan, however, was not totally lost to government epidemiologists. On his birthday — July 29, 1992 — he became a case number in an anonymous forty-four-state study to track the epidemic, organized and financed by the CDC. The founding director of the Incarnation Children's Center, Dr. Stephen W. Nicholas — a professor of pediatrics at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University who helped care for Jonathan — shakes his head in dismay. "Anonymous testing by the CDC," says Nicholas, "showed that since 1988 we had a major problem; we were not diagnosing AIDS until the child got sick."

If they are diagnosed at birth, adds Nicholas, "HIV babies can have longer, higher-quality lives. For over a decade, I have witnessed grief-stricken mothers and fathers learn of their own HIV infections as their baby lay dying in their arms from a preventable pneumonia. Those opposed to testing pregnant women and infants say the stress of knowing the truth is too much for them. Is there less stress in seeing your three-month-old child die? How much more stress would you like?"

In New York State, AIDS activists opposed testing for other reasons, adds Nicholas, "and as a result many women were discouraged from finding out if they were infected. The counseling message was, 'Get a test, but it may wreck your life.' Counseling and education failed. What we needed to get a handle on the epidemic was an effective public health system — we didn't have it."

The director of research at the Pediatric AIDS Foundation in Novato, California, Dr. Arthur J. Ammann, says the problem is nationwide. "Once treatment for HIV-infected babies was available in the late 1980s, anonymous testing by the CDC should have been abandoned immediately, and all those infected identified." And when it was discovered in 1994 that the drug AZT could prevent the transmission of AIDS from an infected mother to her newborn there was, says Ammann, another reason "to change the rules." No infant, he adds, "would refuse a treatment capable of turning the risk of dying



Drawing by Paul Barker

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from a prolonged and painful disease into one of a normal life, but that is precisely the problem: Infants cannot be asked."

Ammann has compared the CDC's anonymous testing of infants to the notorious Tuskegee study that followed four hundred black Alabama sharecroppers infected with syphilis to study the disease's progression. Begun in the early 1930s, the Tuskegee "experiment," financed by the Public Health Service, should have been abandoned when penicillin became available in the 1940s. It was not — for more than a quarter-century — until someone stumbled across these unfortunate men in 1972. Ironically, it was the moral outrage of liberal academics that made the Tuskegee study famous. A research subject's right to informed consent was sacred, but the same groups that defended exploited sharecroppers are silent on the subject of AIDS research upon infants. The drugs are different, but the moral issue is the same.

How did the public health system fail? An early preview of the coming crisis occurred at the Atlanta meeting held by the CDC in February 1987 to examine the future role of HIV testing. The agency's director, Dr. James Mason, said the meeting "was called to apply the best science, the best logic and wisdom to the task of controlling this unprecedented epidemic." The two-day conference — a cross between a university teach-in and a political convention — was attended by eight hundred people, including state and federal health officials, and the representatives of nineteen organizations, from the ACLU, the GMHC, and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, to the American Association of Physicians for Human Rights.

To track the path of the epidemic, the CDC proposed testing new groups, including pregnant women, marriage license applicants, and hospital patients. AIDS activists strongly opposed the new strategy. They argued that wider testing was unnecessary, expensive, and raised civil rights issues that would have to be resolved. They advocated instead more counseling and a mass-education campaign targeted to the general public. For teenagers, they recommended candid discussions of sex and condoms; for drug addicts, needle exchange programs. At the time, William Bennett, then-secretary of education, thought it was the wrong approach. Under certain circumstances, he said, mandatory

DON'T BE SQUEAMISH ABOUT "SEX"

We hear that the Arab delegations at the recent United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women repeatedly objected to the conference's draft platform's use of the word "gender" in place of "sex." They complained that in Arabic, the word "gender" refers exclusively to the sex of nouns, not human beings.

Guess what? That's true in English, too. We wish the feminists who want to halt violence against women would cease to commit violence against English grammar (See "One Last Observation" on page 23 for evidence of further abuse). The Oxford Dictionary confines the correct use of "gender" to language: "Each of the three (or in some langs. two) grammatical kinds, corresponding more or less to distinctions of sex and absence of sex (masculine, feminine, neuter) into which nouns are divided according to the modification they may require. . . ."

"Sex," on the other hand, properly refers to, "the sum of physiological difference in structure and function which distinguish the male from the female in animals and plants; males or females collectively. . . ." It doesn't even get to the act "arising" from sex until definition four.

So, when in France, by all means oo-la-la at a chair's femininity; but elsewhere please avoid such turns of phrase as "The War Between the Genders." ◆

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testing might be needed, and kids may also need to hear about the "virtue of restraint." Bennett's remarks made a few headlines, but in Atlanta — where the important public health decisions were being made — no one was listening.

In the end, the medical establishment voted for individual rights. The prestigious Institute of Medicine, a committee of the National Academy of Sciences, declared that, "mandatory screening of at-risk individuals is not an ethically acceptable means for attempting to reduce the transmission of infection." But it was then-Surgeon General C. Everett Koop who settled the matter. From the nation's public health bully pulpit, Dr. Koop wrote: "Compulsory blood testing of individuals is not necessary. The procedure could be unmanageable and cost-prohibitive."

"The need for legislation to protect the rights of AIDS victims was endorsed by everyone present," wrote a *New York Times* reporter, "from dark-suited federal officials to jeans-clad advocates of homosexual rights."

An unexpected conclusion that was also a radical departure from public health principles. Exactly fifty years earlier, in 1937, President Roosevelt's surgeon general began a campaign against syphilis that advocated the opposite strategy. Faced by an appalling toll of death and deformity among infants with syphilis, Surgeon General Thomas Parran accused "public health officials and physicians of passivity in the face of misery." He organized an aggressive testing and partner notification system — before the discovery of penicillin — that brought the infant and adult epidemic under control.

Yet while Koop caved in to the activists, U.S. blood banks began testing for HIV infection in March 1985, and soon after the Department of Defense began testing all active duty personnel and new recruits. The procedures were neither unmanageable nor cost-prohibitive. The military did the test for three dollars, and blood banks dramatically reduced the number of transfusion-related infections. By the end of 1986, eight state health departments had begun successful programs of routine HIV testing and mandatory reporting. Two states that began HIV testing in 1986 — Colorado and Minnesota — were and are today state models of disease control, common sense, and compassion.

Common sense, however, was no match for the rhetorical skills of the AIDS activists. The activists insisted that mandatory testing was a slippery slope toward detention camps. A few months after the conference in May 1987 the CDC offered two minor concessions to the traditions of epidemiology: It recommended that high-risk groups be "encouraged" to take the HIV test, but warned that individuals should not be tested unless they had received "appropriate counseling" and had given their consent. People have "a right to choose not to be tested" for HIV, said the CDC, and counseling should be "non-judgmental." Mandatory testing should be discouraged, continued the agency, because it was not the best use of money or personnel. As for pregnant women, those at risk were "encouraged" to take the test.

Voluntary testing, however, created major problems for the CDC. Without routine testing to track the epidemic, the agency was faced with the consequences of planned ignorance. Because HIV infection can take as long as a decade to mature into full-blown AIDS, the number of AIDS cases told the agency where the epidemic had been ten years ago — not where it was going. To fill the data hole, the CDC financed studies at methadone and venereal disease clinics, as well as the forty-four-state survey of newborns that had included baby Jonathan. The HIV test was added to a routine infant test for genetic and infectious diseases, including sickle-cell anemia, and syphilis.

AIDS activists did not object to this survey because, since it was anonymous, the results could not be traced to the mother. What they couldn't know was that six years later, the survey would provoke a major political crisis in Albany and Washington. Nettie Mayersohn, a Democratic Assemblywoman from Queens, embarked on a personal crusade to get HIV-infected infants identified and treated. In 1993, she proposed a bill in the New York State Assembly that would unblind the CDC study, and make notification of the infant's mother mandatory. Leaning half across her desk, Mayersohn says angrily: "I simply couldn't believe it. In New York State, a baby had become a number."

Mayersohn's bill has been blocked by the Democratic leadership of the assembly for three years. AIDS activists and feminist groups are vehemently opposed to it, and the bill has sharply divided the medical community. The ACLU insists that the bill would violate New York State's tough HIV law, which requires written consent for an HIV test. The ACLU may be right: The 1988 law, pushed through the assembly without any

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debate, has been a major stumbling block to wider HIV testing.

Last March, a Newborn HIV Notification Act modeled after the Mayersohn bill was introduced in the House of Representatives. It brought a quick response from the Clinton administration. Nat Hentoff reported in the *Village Voice* that Congressman Gary Ackerman, a Democrat from Queens who sponsored the bill, had a visit from Dr. David Satcher, the head of the CDC, and Patricia Fleming, the White House's coordinator of AIDS policy. Satcher told Ackerman "that if he insisted on going ahead with this bill to unblind the infant test, the CDC would withdraw the study," Hentoff wrote. Ackerman refused, and in May the CDC, under orders from the White House, suspended the test.

In July, the CDC published its recommendations for the testing of pregnant women — returning to a position it briefly held in the winter of 1986. "Because of advances, particularly in the use of AZT to prevent newborn AIDS," the CDC guidelines recommended "routine HIV counseling and voluntary testing for all pregnant women." The phrase "voluntary testing" makes it clear that the agency is still stuck in the murky politics of the 1987 Atlanta meeting.

Some progress has been made, though: Instead of testing just high-risk women, the CDC now recommends that "all" pregnant women should be tested. [And on October 10, as part of a legal settlement, New York Governor George Pataki announced that he would unblind the New York infant AIDS test and make the results available to their mothers.] But the CDC still refuses to pose — let alone answer — the fundamental question: Can the nation continue to depend upon voluntary testing to bring this deadly epidemic under control?

In 1987, women represented four percent of AIDS cases; today they are almost twenty percent. Last year, eight thousand infants were born to HIV-infected mothers. Of the 1.3 million HIV-infected Americans, fewer than half have been tested. The situation is so grave that the FDA is considering approval of an HIV home test kit, promoted by — of all people — Dr. C. Everett Koop, who says the nation has failed to pursue all options in identifying those infected.

Does the country really need the privatization of AIDS testing? And who would track the sexual contacts of those who test themselves at home, when twenty-five state health departments — including those of the states with the highest rates of infection, Florida, California, Texas, and New York — do not report HIV cases by name?

When I spoke to him in Atlanta seven years ago, Michael T. Osterholm, the director of epidemiology of the Minnesota Department of Health, said, "The time to deal with the crisis is now. In five years it will be too late. Perceived risk — not education — changes behavior, and that is the greatest value of HIV testing."

Osterholm was right. Denver's public health director, Franklyn Judson, explains why: "The CDC continues to reflect the pressures they are under. They strive for consensus — and what you get are contradictory, unclear guidelines." In Denver, says Judson, "the HIV test has been routinely offered to everyone at risk since the mid-1980s. We have had five thousand cases of AIDS, and three thousand deaths, but no one has lost their confidentiality because of the public health department."

The basic goals of HIV testing are surveillance and reporting, adds Judson, but we also have a duty to warn the uninfected and to break the chain of transmission that keeps the epidemic alive. Judson warned six years ago that "voluntarism will not work for some individuals, and society must choose between effective public health law — including restrictive measures —now, or a much larger reservoir of HIV infection and more deaths from AIDS for many generations to come."

Dr. Sanford F. Kuvin, the vice chairman of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases, says, "We have been betting on the wrong horse for fourteen years. One hundred thousand women of child-bearing age are infected, and clearly CDC voluntarism has failed. All pregnant women should be mandatorily tested for HIV, have mandatory counseling, and — if positive — be offered AZT during pregnancy."

Would mandatory or routine testing bring an end to the epidemic? No one can know. But at the very least, lives would be saved, and public health policy would no longer represent a retreat from common decency and sense. The nation has a moral duty to care for those who are infected, but the infected also have a responsibility to those with whom they share their lives — and bodies. Public health officials once enforced that responsibility. They need to do so again. ◆

Helen Mathews Smith is the former editor of MD *magazine. She is now writing a book on the HIV/AIDS epidemic.*

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One last observation . . .

"People-Centered Sustainable Development" and Other Helpful Suggestions for Women's Equality

First, how about people-centered sustainable sentences?
(Clause 19) "Absolute poverty and the feminization of poverty, unemployment, the increasing fragility of the environment, continued violence against women and the widespread exclusion of half of humanity from institutions of power and governance underscore the need to continue the search for development, peace and security and for ways of assuring people-centered sustainable development."

"This is my daughter Lisa, also known as my 'gender-based barrier.'"
(Clause 24) "... Female-maintained households are very often among the poorest because of wage discrimination, occupational segregation patterns in the labor market and other gender-based barriers."

Not to mention marital counseling by Bella Abzug.
(Clause 24 cont'd.*)* "Family disintegration, population movements between urban and rural areas within countries, international migration, war and internal displacements are factors contributing to the rise of female-headed households."

Like giving birth, for instance.
(Clause 28) "In many countries, the differences between women's and men's achievements and activities are still not recognized as the consequences of socially constructed gender roles rather than immutable biological differences."

Some excerpts from the "Platform for Action" from the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women

Men are so toxic that pollution is probably good for them anyway.
(Clause 36) "Continuing environmental degradation that affects all human lives often has a more direct impact on women. Women's health and their livelihood are threatened by pollution and toxic wastes, large-scale deforestation, desertification, drought and depletion of the soil and of coastal and marine resources, with a rising incidence of environmentally related health problems and even death reported among women and girls."

Equality will only be achieved by maintaining a highly paid, female civil service.
(Clause 162) "Lack of employment in the private sector and reductions in public services and public service jobs have affected women disproportionately."

Thus the need for more conferences like this one.
(Clause 29) "Moreover, ten years after the Nairobi Conference, equality between women and men has still not been achieved." ◆

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*"Intrepid Tacklers of Feminist Pieties"**

FOR THE PAST three years, the Independent Women's Forum has been taking on the old establishment of feminist organizations – and winning. "The IWF has a profile almost unheard of for a group that is the new kid on the block," said the *Boston Globe*. "In the marketplace of ideas, from the national news media all the way down to local radio, the IWF has shown its real strength .... [The] IWF is well on its way to becoming the foremost media nemesis of the feminist movement."

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